

**MAYOR SHARPE JAMES
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY
FIFTH INAUGURAL ADDRESS**



REVISED

Monday, July 1, 2002

**New Jersey Performing Arts Center
(NJPAC)
12 Noon**

Thank you.

Reverend Clergy, Honorable Members of the Newark Municipal Council, Department Directors, elected and appointed officials, honored guests, my wife Mary, my sons John, Elliott and Kevin. My mother, Ms. Beulah James Fluker, supporters, friends, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

Today is an exciting day for Newark. Today, we set sail on a new course, a new direction with new players and new ideas. Today, we begin to make new plans to make Newark better. Today our future is much brighter. Today, I salute and congratulate the Honorable Members of the Newark Municipal Council. Congratulations on your successful election.

Likewise, on May 14th, the people of Newark went to the polls and voted to continue our progress. On May 14th, the "REAL DEAL," Sharpe James was re-elected Mayor—the first and perhaps the last person in the history of Newark to be elected to serve five terms as Mayor. No one before me has had this honor, and perhaps, no one after me.

With this historical fact in mind, while personally thanking you, the wonderful citizens of Newark who encouraged me, supported me, worked in my campaign and voted for me, I humbly say once again, "Give the Glory to God," who carried me through the storm.

When I was weak, He was strong. When I had doubts, He offered hope. He constantly reminded me to "Let the Work I've done speak for me." He constantly reminded me that: It's not about how long one lives, but how well one lives. It's not about how long one serves, but how well one serves. The most important question is: Did you help someone as you traveled the highways and byways of life? Did you make a difference in someone's life? Did you reach out and touch somebody's hand? Did you make this a better world if you can?

As we gather today, behind us are the scars of a long and heated campaign that brought out the worst and best of Newark. A campaign that unfortunately-- all too often--was divided along racial, neighborhood and ward boundaries. A campaign that unfortunately, too often appealed to the fears, ignorance and jealousies of Newark citizens. A campaign unfortunately where The Star-Ledger and other media took sides, as opposed to being objective and fair.

For example on June 10, 2002 one candidate in the June 11th runoff election stated in the Star Ledger that his team was hoping for a large voter turn out in the North and East Wards, and hopefully low voter interest and turnout in the West, Central and South Wards. This clearly was a racist and divisive statement that has no basis in a city that is a melting pot of all races, all creeds and all religions. A rainbow tapestry of America.

When I think of Newark I think of the 10-year-old black youth at an outdoor festival. A white man was blowing up balloons and was releasing them to soar to great heights. Red balloons, yellow, green and white. And the youth walked over to the man, pulled on his jacket and asked, "Hey mister, can a black balloon fly as high as the others?" The man looked down at the inquisitive youth, smiled and said. "Well son, let's give it a try." He reached into his pocket, took out a black balloon, filled it with helium, tied a knot and released it, and soon the black balloon soared as high as the yellow, green and white balloons. The youth was smiling and happy, but the man looked down and said, "son I know what you are thinking, but it's not the color that counts, it's what's inside."

So clearly, because of our diversity and Newark being a melting pot, I disagreed vehemently then and I disagree vehemently now with that candidate's biased statement in the Star-Ledger. For Newark to be a city of hope and opportunity, we need to encourage every citizen to register and vote. We need more voter participation, not less. We should never forget our heroes like Fannie Lou Hamer, Medgar Evers, Viola Liuzzo, Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner and the four young girls who lost their lives in the Birmingham church bombing. They died fighting for Civil Rights. They died fighting for voting rights. We should never forget to recognize and honor those who have bled and died for our right to vote.

As candidates and especially those who run at large and for Mayor, we should be advocating programs and policies that appeal to every citizen in every neighborhood and in every ward. We should want every registered voter in every ward to vote. We should want 100 percent voter participation, and every elected official in Newark should respect every citizen in Newark.

For no citizen in Newark deserves more services than any other citizen and no ward in Newark is better than any other ward. We have no elitist citizens. We have no elitist neighborhoods or wards. We have only each other. We are family. We are all God's children. Together we stand, divided we fall.

Today, I call for all citizens to unite in working together to make Newark better. Today I call for one Newark—a Newark working together for better tomorrows.

THE JAMES CABINET

To start us in the right direction, we have recruited, reassigned, transferred and continued personnel in areas of strength to improve our delivery of municipal services and to continue our fight against crime, drugs, auto theft and activities that impair our quality of life.

We plan to do more at less cost to the taxpayers. We plan to care for our young people and senior citizens. We plan to beautify and make our neighborhoods safe. We will demand that our children receive a quality education that will prepare them to compete in a local and global economy. We plan to work cooperatively with the elected members of the Newark Municipal Council. We plan to make this term in office our best ever!

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

To achieve these commendable goals, I am pleased to announce that the man we selected from a nationwide search, who got us off to such a good start during my first term; a man who left us to be a top official for the host committee of the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta; a gifted, experienced and competent, municipal administrator, Richard Monteilh has returned to Newark to become business administrator. We are fortunate to have his talent, creativity and vision serving the administration during these crisis times in America.

Harold Lucas our current business administrator, who has won numerous awards and national recognition while having previously served as director of Newark's Department of Development, director of the Newark Housing Authority, Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under President Bill Clinton, will return to direct the Newark Housing Authority, where he will oversee plans for the \$35 million Hope VI grant program. With his leadership and a team effort, a new neighborhood, a new Central High School, new housing and a new shopping mall will emerge in the Central Ward.

Harold also will oversee the refurbishing of low-rise public housing units and the creation of recreational parks, and he will address safety concerns and quality of life issues for our 30,000 citizens residing in public housing. Our challenge is to continue to make public housing no different than market rate housing. As the Bible states: "What you do for the least of my people, you do for me."

POLICE DIRECTOR

Our highest priority will continue to be public safety. We salute the outstanding work of former police director, Joseph Santiago, now state superintendent of police, and Police Chief Anthony Ambrose.

Under their leadership over the past five years, Newark's crime rate fell 52 percent. To continue this legacy, Robert J. Rankin, Jr., a former Newark deputy chief and former police director in Irvington, will serve as police director.

He is a no-nonsense, career police officer, who held every rank in the Newark Police Department, and consistently was one of the highest scorers on the Civil Service exams.

He knows all the players, both in the Newark Police Department and in the other county, state and federal law enforcement agencies with whom we have partnered to fight crime and maintain our decrease in criminal activity.

We welcome Robert Rankin as police director for the City of Newark.

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

To lead our Department of Economic Development and Housing, a gifted Newark native is returning to his birthplace. Dr. Niathan Allen, who has exemplary qualifications and is leaving his position as program executive for the Community Development and Technical Assistance Program at the Congress of National Black Churches (CNBC) in Washington, D.C., where he oversees the allocation of technical resources to nine states and multiple jurisdictions for HUD. He will bring a new perspective to neighborhood restoration and working with faith-based organizations. Welcome home Dr. Allen!

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF FIRE

Our Fire Department will face a mandate to integrate our firehouses, to improve fire morale and to “give firefighting and community services” a higher priority than politics.

To lead this charge, a true professional firefighter, former Fire Chief Edward Dunham will serve as director of the Newark Fire Department. Ed is a career fire officer, who joined the department in 1970 and worked his way through the ranks to captain before being named fire chief in 1998. Since his retirement in 2000, he has been the department's affirmative action specialist, and both during active service and in his current position, he has been the prime mover of efforts to recruit and train minority personnel for the department. We plan to make our Fire Department the best in America and to honor a court order to make our fire department mirror the City of Newark.

DEPARTMENTS OF WATER & UTILITIES, LAW AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Departments of Water and Sewer Utilities, Law and Health and Human Services will see their exemplary directors returning with valued experience to expand and enhance their delivery of services. We expect much more knowledge and work from them in during this new term of office, 2002 to 2006.

Thus, we proudly welcome back:

- a) JoAnne Watson---- as Corporation Counsel
- b) Cathy Cuomo-Cecere--- as Director of the
Department of Health and Human Services
- c) Philip LiVecchi --- Director of the Department of
Water and Sewer Utilities

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

The Department of Neighborhood Services will no longer include the Division of Recreation and Cultural Affairs, which will be transferred to the Office of the Mayor. The Department of Neighborhood Services will have an acting director, Dr. Colleen Walton, a true professional and community activist. We plan for Neighborhood Services to give full priority to neighborhood preservation, beautification and cleanliness.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING

For the important Department of Engineering, we are conducting a search for a highly competent individual who is both a manager and licensed engineer to lead this large agency. Someone who will demand a day's work for a day's pay from everyone in the Department of Engineering. We will not tolerate inspectors and supervisors who disappear during the day or who come to work and leave early!

Our plan in 2002 is to retain and recruit the best talent available to improve our delivery of municipal services. Our plan is to make government work for the citizens of Newark. Our plan is to be sensitive, responsive, creative, timely and professional in the delivery of municipal services. I believe that every request for service should be honored. Every telephone call should be answered and every letter responded to. We, the administration must never forget that we work for the taxpayers of Newark. You are our bosses.

And yet, as I have often stated before, government cannot do it alone. Government is not a cure all. Government cannot stop those who litter, commit crimes of passion, steal a car, break and enter into a business or residence. And, government cannot raise your children! It still takes a whole village to raise a child.

CITIZEN HELP

If we are family, we need to call the police less and start calling more mothers and fathers, who created life and must accept the responsibility of raising their own children.

CLEANLINESS

If we are family, we need to call the Division of Sanitation less about dirty streets and dirty lots. Instead, we, ourselves both young and old, need to stop littering. We need to pick up a broom and a rake to lead clean-up campaigns in our neighborhoods. We need to sweep in front of our residence, cut our grass, paint our houses, make repairs to our properties and dispose of our garbage properly. Cleanliness is next to godliness, and all of us are responsible for the appearance, maintenance and beautification of our city. If Newark is not clean, it reflects on all of us, not just government!

Trash, garbage and litter do not come from Mars or Pluto. They come from citizens—both young and old—who do not care about themselves or do not care about their city. We can do better. We must do better. We must not litter. We must clean up in our space and in our neighborhood.

PARTNERSHIPS

We can and should work together for a cleaner and safer Newark. By working together, we can:

- a. **Drugs:** Send a message to lawbreakers who sell drugs on our neighborhood street corners that it is illegal and unacceptable, and they will be arrested. We want it known that we will continue to wage a meaningful war against drug dealers and drug users. We will not surrender our neighborhood streets to lawbreakers.

- b. **Schools:** By working together, we will demand that the State of New Jersey return our school system to local control, using a management by objective team approach and not “back to business as usual.” We will demand full funding for preschool education. We will demand competent teachers and administrators. We will demand that school construction start now.

The end of the state takeover should lead to a better management and school organizational model to ensure that fiscal and personnel abuses will not be tolerated and that the education of our children will be the highest priority.

Newark's children are our most valuable assets. They are our future. They are tomorrow's leaders: doctors, attorneys, teachers, scientists, artists, engineers, and yes, Mayors and Councilpersons. So we must ensure that our schools give our children the best possible education, so that they gain the academic, emotional, social and moral tools to lead productive and happy lives and are able to compete effectively in a local and global economy. We must save our children!

- c. **Auto Theft:** By working together, we will treat auto theft as a crime and not as a form of recreation, a simple misdemeanor or a mere slap on the wrist. We will seek passage of the New Jersey Senator Sharpe James' Auto Theft bill calling for a fiscal penalty, license revocation, and jail penalty for those who continue to steal cars and disrespect the rights and property of others.
- d. **Neighborhood Restoration and Beautification:** By working together in the years 2002 to 2006, we want to complete the progress we have begun in our neighborhoods. We will continue to work with developers who are building town homes and single family homes and rehabilitating historic apartment houses and industrial buildings for rental and purchase.

We will maintain and enhance our recreational facilities and public parks, such as the Ironbound Recreation Center and Mildred Helms Park, which is being transformed into an urban oasis with funds from the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery program, Prudential Insurance Company and the State Green Acres Program.

POLICE AND SECURITY

On the issue of police and security, we can never forget that it has been almost 10 months since the horrific attacks on our country last September 11 that took the lives of over 3,000 people in New York, Washington and a field in Pennsylvania. Yet from the ashes of destruction, Americans came together as a people in unity, faith and resolution to defeat the terrorists, to protect our people and our country and to rebuild a shattered nation both physically and emotionally.

The City of Newark has been in the forefront of American cities in meeting this national crisis. We have developed a Domestic Security Plan to address future threats.

We have increased security at all municipal facilities, including our Watershed and have joined together with county, state and local law enforcement agencies in securing all government building and our transportation systems, including our international port and airport. We have trained municipal workers and emergency medical personnel to combat bioterrorism and created a Police Homeland Security Division. Within this division is the city's first-ever Aviation Unit, which allows the department to observe incidents from the sky and coordinate our response.

The Aviation Unit also allows us to better monitor known areas for drugs and other criminal activities.

We have created a Drug and Gang Enforcement Task Force, which is in our neighborhoods fighting drug dealers and gangs. Through a partnership with the New Jersey State Police and its Superintendent Joseph Santiago, our former police director, law enforcement officers are going undercover in our neighborhoods to address drug dealing and quality of life issues.

This year, already we have placed two classes of recruits through the Police Academy. More than any other time in Newark's history, our police department is representative of the diverse population it serves. We continue to cut crime in Newark continuing the trend that has seen crime decrease 53 percent in the last five years. And we still are not satisfied. We can do better. We must defeat the drug dealers.

Still, we are proud of the work of the men and women in our police department who risk their lives every day to fight crime and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods, and we will continue to give them the best training and resources to accomplish their jobs.

Yes, the campaign is over, and now is the time to replace talk with action. Now is the time for results not promises. Now is the time to prove worthy of your vote of confidence. Now is the time to make Newark better.

In the last 16 years, this administration has accomplished much. I stand before you today proud of our work, but also humbled by the fact that they are the results of many working together. These successes and achievements are your achievements. They are your victory, a victory for the people of Newark. A victory for those who love Newark. We, not I.

So today, we begin a new administration. We face many challenges. Old ones like tackling crime and drugs, jobs and housing development. New ones, like terrorism, the development of our Passaic River waterfront, rebuilding the Central Ward with Hope VI funds and bringing an arena for the New Jersey Nets and New Jersey Devils to our downtown.

We see these challenges of the future as opportunities to excel, as we continue to work together. We welcome these challenges and the new opportunities they bring. We believe in Newark, where today as we take our oaths of office we celebrate the reaffirmation of a democratic government and the democratic process.

We believe in a Newark where there is justice and prosperity. We will work to create a Newark with safe neighborhoods and good schools, where students can learn and teachers teach. A Newark where everyone can enjoy the right of living in safe, decent and attractive housing. This is why I sought reelection in May to continue as your Mayor because of our shared faith and belief in Newark.

So, today we look forward to the future. We roll up our sleeves and go to work to continue the progress and our efforts to rebuild Newark. Together we will face the challenges, and together we will reap the fruits of our labors.

As President John F. Kennedy said in his inaugural address, at a time when America was—as it is now—faced by foreign and domestic challenges, “With good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.”

So as I close today, the question is still there, will Newark continue to improve? Can we continue to dream great dreams? Will we have the conviction and courage to make our great dreams come true?

For the answer, I turn to the words of the later, Reverend, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the prophet, Isaiah (Chapter, 40, Verse, 4-5):

“I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY EVERY
VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED,
EVERY HILL AND MOUNTAIN SHALL BE MADE LOW,
THE ROUGH PLACES WILL BE MADE PLAIN,
AND THE CROOKED PLACES WILL BE MADE STRAIGHT,
AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED
AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE IT TOGETHER.”

Thank you. God bless you.